

BATES STOPS WYCOMBE WIN

Wycombe W. 1 Tooting 1

PAUL BATES, departed hero of Wycombe Wanderers, returned to Loakes Park yesterday to give a typically clever display. But he was unable to prevent his talented new club Tooting and Mitcham from being held to a draw.

Battling Wanderers thoroughly deserved their point. They matched Tooting's greater craft with fighting spirit and dash and if they had taken their chances could have won easily.

Despite the fact that the experiment of playing reserve team pivot Peter Cook at centre forward was a failure—he was well held by Brian Bennett—Wanderers made Tooting's defence look very ragged at times.

The determined Ivor Ashby was only inches away from a goal on three occasions and Wycombe's new skipper, Len Worley, frequently wrong-footed the opposition.

It was Worley who schemed Wycombe's 36th minute goal. Tooting thought Ashby was offside but the referee said "no" and inside left Tommy Holmes shot a good goal.

The irrepressible Bates accepted Edwards's pass and scored the brilliant 30-yard equalising goal within seconds of the second half starting.

This inspired a determined Tooting revival which really tested a Wycombe defence in which wing half David Summers and newcomer Charles Gale were outstanding.

Battling Wycombe Surprise Tooting

TOOTING and Mitcham United, amateur soccer glamour boys, had some of the gloss knocked off them at Loakes Park on Saturday when they were a shade lucky to escape with a 1-1 draw, writes *Argus*. Cocksure after scoring 11 goals in the first two games, Tooting nearly conceded a goal within the first 20 seconds and were frequently at the receiving end against a magnificently aggressive Wycombe side.

Given the incentive of proving to their old comrade Paul Bates—facing them in the Tooting colours — that they can play good football without him, Wanderers made up for any shortcomings in cohesion and class by giving United a lesson in fighting spirit and determination.

Captain-for-the-day Bates was given a generous welcome by the Wanderers fans. He could not expect any generosity from centre-half John Fisher and he didn't get it. Bates had a good game—he was easily the best of the Tooting attackers—but Fisher had a great game. Long John, playing most intelligently, refused to be drawn or ruffled by the wandering Bates and a memorable duel ended with honours even.

Long Range

Basis of this excellent Wanderers performance was the composed, crackling half-back line in which David Thomas, a second 'shadow' to Bates, and Fisher were outstanding. For almost the entire first half the Tooting forwards were marshalled away from the home penalty area and confined to long range shooting, and not even the subtle Bates could find a way through.

Wycombe's experiment of playing airman Peter Cook at centre-forward was not a success on this showing. He was well controlled by the vastly experienced Brian Bennett. But despite this setback Wanderers' lively forwards cut out the majority of the chances. Tooting's goalkeeper Farlam was frequently in trouble — particularly against the fiery Ivor Ashby, who thrice failed to score by inches. Nimble-footed Len Worley was another sword in Tooting's flank.

After 36 minutes Tooting's defence made a bad mistake. Thinking Ashby was offside they made no attempt to intercept as he ran for Worley's pass. But the whistle never blew and Tommy Holmes, who was to miss other chances, made no mistake with a low shot.

Little to Fear

A typical Bates goal — blinded into the roof of the net from 30 yards range as soon as the second half had started — proved the tonic Tooting needed and the last half hour was a tense and exciting struggle in which either side might have gone ahead.

But Wanderers—in this mean and menacing mood — have little to fear from anybody, Tooting included.